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LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Senate

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House

The Committee on Appropriations (Grall) recommended the following:

Senate Amendment (with title amendment)

Delete everything after the enacting clause
and insert:

Section 1. Section 1004.933, Florida Statutes, is created
to read:

1004.933 Graduation Alternative to Traditional Education
(GATE) Program.—

(1) LEGISLATIVE INTENT.—

(a) It is the intent of the Legislature to create an



11 alternative pathway to education and workforce opportunities for
12 students who have withdrawn from high school prior to
13 graduation.

14 (b) It is the intent of the Legislature to affirm the
15 unequivocal value of a standard high school diploma as the
16 primary education credential by which students access higher
17 education and workforce opportunities. Further, the Legislature
18 affirms that parental consent is required for a student under 18
19 years of age to withdraw from high school prior to graduation.

20 (c) Therefore, the Legislature intends to assist students
21 who have challenges completing the requirements for a standard
22 high school diploma by developing mechanisms that provide
23 struggling students opportunities to catch up with their cohort
24 as an alternative to withdrawing from high school prior to
25 obtaining a standard high school diploma.

26 (d) The Legislature recognizes that when a student
27 withdraws from high school prior to graduation, the student has
28 not received the full value of a taxpayer-funded pre-K-12
29 education, and therefore lacks the education credential
30 essential to gainful employment and future educational
31 opportunities. Therefore, the Legislature intends to provide an
32 alternative pathway program, waiving tuition and fees for the
33 program for participating students who have not earned a
34 standard high school diploma.

35 (2) PROGRAM CREATION.—The Graduation Alternative to
36 Traditional Education (GATE) Program is created within the
37 Department of Education.

38 (3) DEFINITIONS.—As used in this section, the term:

39 (a) "Career education program" means an applied technology



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40 diploma program as defined in s. 1004.02(7) or a career
41 certificate program as defined in s. 1004.02(20).

42 (b) "Institution" means a school district career center
43 established under s. 1001.44, a charter technical career center
44 established under s. 1002.34, or a Florida College System
45 institution identified in s. 1000.21.

46 (4) PAYMENT WAIVER; ELIGIBILITY.-

47 (a) Notwithstanding any other provision of state law, an
48 institution shall waive 100 percent of the registration,
49 tuition, laboratory, and examination fees for a student
50 participating in the GATE Program. Instructional materials
51 assigned for use under the GATE Program must be made available
52 to GATE Program students free of charge. An institution may not
53 require payment by students of instructional materials costs
54 eligible for reimbursement under s. 1009.711.

55 (b) To be eligible for participation in the GATE Program, a
56 student may not have earned a standard high school diploma
57 pursuant to s. 1003.4282 or a high school equivalency diploma
58 pursuant to s. 1003.435 before enrolling in the GATE Program and
59 must:

60 1. Be a resident of this state as defined in s. 1009.21(1);

61 2. Be 16 to 21 years of age at the time of initial
62 enrollment;

63 3. Select the adult secondary education program and career
64 education program of his or her choice at the time of admission
65 to the GATE Program, provided that the program is included on
66 the Master Credentials List under s. 445.004(4). The student may
67 not change the requested pathway after enrollment, except that,
68 if necessary for the student, the student may enroll in an adult



69 basic education program prior to enrolling in the adult
70 secondary education program;

71 4. Maintain a 2.0 GPA for career and technical education
72 coursework; and

73 5. Notwithstanding s. 1003.435(4), complete the programs
74 under subparagraph 3. within 3 years after his or her initial
75 enrollment unless the institution determines that an extension
76 is warranted due to extenuating circumstances.

77 (c) Subject to the availability of funds, a student who
78 meets the requirements of paragraph (b) and is enrolled in the
79 GATE Program is eligible to receive the stipend specified in s.
80 1009.895(3).

81 (d) An institution may not impose additional criteria to
82 determine a student's eligibility to receive a waiver under this
83 section.

84 (4) DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBILITIES.—In addition to
85 administering the GATE Program, the Department of Education
86 shall perform the following duties:

87 (a) Disseminate information about the GATE Program to
88 eligible institutions, local workforce development boards, and
89 other local, regional, or state initiatives that interact with
90 the GATE Program's target population.

91 (b) Connect prospective students directly to eligible
92 institutions.

93 (c) Provide access to online career planning tools.

94 (5) REPORTING.—Beginning October 1, 2025, and each October
95 1 thereafter, the Department of Education shall submit a report
96 to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of
97 the House of Representatives on the number and value of



98 registration, tuition, laboratory, and examination fees and
99 instructional materials costs waived and reimbursed, by
100 institution; the number of students who have obtained a standard
101 high school diploma or high school equivalency diploma while
102 participating in the GATE Program; the number of students
103 completing an applied technology diploma or career certificate
104 while participating in the GATE Program; the number of students
105 participating in the GATE Program who receive a stipend under s.
106 1009.895(3); the number of students who have earned an industry
107 certification on the CAPE Industry Certification Funding List
108 while participating in the GATE Program; and the number of
109 students who completed the GATE Program. The reporting period
110 shall cover the previous academic year.

111 (6) RULES.—The State Board of Education may adopt rules to
112 implement this section.

113 Section 2. Paragraph (g) of subsection (1) of section
114 445.009, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

115 445.009 One-stop delivery system.—

116 (1) The one-stop delivery system is the state's primary
117 customer-service strategy for offering every Floridian access,
118 through service sites or telephone or computer networks, to the
119 following services:

120 (g) Adult education, ~~and~~ basic skills training, integrated
121 education and training, and the Graduation Alternative to
122 Traditional Education Program under s. 1004.933.

123 Section 3. Paragraph (c) of subsection (1) of section
124 1003.21, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

125 1003.21 School attendance.—

126 (1)



127 (c) A student who attains the age of 16 years during the
128 school year is not subject to compulsory school attendance
129 beyond the date upon which he or she attains that age if the
130 student files a formal declaration of intent to terminate school
131 enrollment with the district school board. Public school
132 students who have attained the age of 16 years and who have not
133 graduated are subject to compulsory school attendance until the
134 formal declaration of intent is filed with the district school
135 board. The declaration must acknowledge that terminating school
136 enrollment is likely to reduce the student's earning potential
137 and must be signed by the student and the student's parent. The
138 school district shall notify the student's parent of receipt of
139 the student's declaration of intent to terminate school
140 enrollment. The student's certified school counselor or other
141 school personnel shall conduct an exit interview with the
142 student to determine the reasons for the student's decision to
143 terminate school enrollment and actions that could be taken to
144 keep the student in school. The student's certified school
145 counselor or other school personnel shall inform the student of
146 opportunities to continue his or her education in a different
147 environment, including, but not limited to, adult education, and
148 high school equivalency examination preparation, and the
149 Graduation Alternative to Traditional Education Program under s.
150 1004.933. Additionally, the student shall complete a survey in a
151 format prescribed by the Department of Education to provide data
152 on student reasons for terminating enrollment and actions taken
153 by schools to keep students enrolled.

154 Section 4. Subsection (3) of section 1003.435, Florida
155 Statutes, is amended to read:



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156 1003.435 High school equivalency diploma program.—
157 (3) Each district school board shall:
158 (a) Offer and administer the high school equivalency
159 diploma examinations and the subject area examinations to all
160 candidates pursuant to rules of the State Board of Education.
161 (b) Notify each candidate of adult secondary and
162 postsecondary education options available in or near the school
163 district, including the Graduation Alternative to Traditional
164 Education Program under s. 1004.933. The candidate must also be
165 informed of the eligibility requirements and any minimum
166 academic requirements for each available option.
167 Section 5. Section 1009.711, Florida Statutes, is created
168 to read:
169 1009.711 GATE Scholarship Program.—
170 (1) The GATE Scholarship Program is created to financially
171 support institutions participating in the GATE Program
172 established pursuant to s. 1004.933.
173 (2) The Department of Education shall administer the GATE
174 Scholarship Program in accordance with rules adopted by the
175 State Board of Education.
176 (3) The GATE Scholarship Program shall reimburse eligible
177 institutions for registration, tuition, laboratory, and
178 examination fees and related instructional materials costs for
179 students enrolled in the GATE Program. School district career
180 centers and Florida College System institutions must be
181 reimbursed at the in-state resident tuition rate established in
182 s. 1009.22(3)(c).
183 (4) Each participating institution shall report to the
184 department all students enrolled in the GATE Program during the



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185 fall, spring, or summer terms within 30 days after the end of
186 regular registration. For each eligible student, the institution
187 shall report the total reimbursable expenses by category, which
188 the department must consider in determining an institution's
189 award under this section. The department shall reimburse each
190 participating institution no later than 30 days after the
191 institution has reported enrollment for that term.

192 (5) Reimbursements from the GATE Scholarship Program are
193 contingent upon an annual appropriation in the General
194 Appropriations Act. If the statewide reimbursement amount is
195 greater than the appropriation, the institutional reimbursement
196 amounts specified in subsection (3) must be prorated among the
197 institutions that have timely reported eligible students to the
198 department.

199 (6) The State Board of Education may adopt rules to
200 implement this section.

201 Section 6. Subsection (10) of section 1011.80, Florida
202 Statutes, is amended to read:

203 1011.80 Funds for operation of workforce education
204 programs.—

205 (10) A high school student dually enrolled under s.
206 1007.271 in a workforce education program operated by a Florida
207 College System institution or school district career center
208 generates the amount calculated for workforce education funding,
209 including any payment of performance funding, and the
210 proportional share of full-time equivalent enrollment generated
211 through the Florida Education Finance Program for the student's
212 enrollment in a high school. If a high school student is dually
213 enrolled in a Florida College System institution program,



214 including a program conducted at a high school, the Florida
215 College System institution earns the funds generated for
216 workforce education funding, and the school district earns the
217 proportional share of full-time equivalent funding from the
218 Florida Education Finance Program. If a student is dually
219 enrolled in a career center operated by the same district as the
220 district in which the student attends high school, that district
221 earns the funds generated for workforce education funding and
222 also earns the proportional share of full-time equivalent
223 funding from the Florida Education Finance Program. If a student
224 is dually enrolled in a workforce education program provided by
225 a career center operated by a different school district, the
226 funds must be divided between the two school districts
227 proportionally from the two funding sources. A student may not
228 be reported for funding in a dual enrollment workforce education
229 program unless the student has completed the basic skills
230 assessment pursuant to s. 1004.91. A student who is coenrolled
231 in a K-12 education program and an adult education program may
232 be reported for purposes of funding in an adult education
233 program. If a student is coenrolled in ~~core curricula~~ courses
234 for credit recovery or dropout prevention purposes and does not
235 have a pattern of excessive absenteeism or habitual truancy or a
236 history of disruptive behavior in school, the student may be
237 reported for funding for up to four ~~two~~ courses per year. Such a
238 student is exempt from the payment of the block tuition for
239 adult general education programs provided in s. 1009.22(3)(c).
240 ~~The Department of Education shall develop a list of courses to~~
241 ~~be designated as core curricula courses for the purposes of~~
242 ~~coenrollment.~~



243 Section 7. Section 1011.804, Florida Statutes, is created
244 to read:

245 1011.804 GATE Startup Grant Program.—

246 (1) The GATE Startup Grant Program is established within
247 the Department of Education to fund and support the startup and
248 implementation of the GATE Program, subject to legislative
249 appropriation. The purpose of the grant program is to increase
250 access to programs that support adult learners earning a high
251 school credential, either a high school diploma or its
252 equivalent, and a workforce credential aligned to statewide or
253 regional demand. The department shall administer the grants,
254 determine eligibility, and distribute grant awards.

255 (2) The department may solicit proposals from school
256 districts and Florida College System institutions without
257 programs that meet the requirements of s. 1004.933(2). Such
258 school districts and institutions must be located in or serve a
259 rural area of opportunity as designated by the Governor.

260 (3) The department shall prioritize grant proposals that
261 combine adult basic education, adult secondary education, and
262 career education programs at one location or allow students to
263 complete programs through distance learning. An applicant may
264 not receive more than 10 percent of the total amount
265 appropriated for the program.

266 (4) The department shall make the grant application
267 available to potential applicants no later than August 15, 2024.
268 A grant proposal must include:

269 (a) The Florida College System institution or institutions
270 that will provide the adult basic education, adult secondary
271 education, and career education programs;



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272 (b) The proposed adult basic education and adult secondary
273 education program or programs the institution or institutions
274 will provide, and the projected enrollment for such program or
275 programs;

276 (c) The proposed career education program or programs the
277 institution or institutions will provide and the projected
278 enrollment for such program or programs;

279 (d) The credential or credentials associated with the
280 career education program or programs. Such credential or
281 credentials must be included on the Master Credentials List
282 under s. 445.004(4);

283 (e) The cost of instruction for all programs contemplated
284 in the proposal, including costs for tuition, fees,
285 registration, and laboratory, examination, and instructional
286 materials costs;

287 (f) Outreach strategies, including collaboration with local
288 workforce development boards; and

289 (g) A plan or timeline for implementing s. 1004.933 and
290 enrolling students.

291 (5) Grant funds may be used for planning activities and
292 other expenses associated with the creation of the GATE Program,
293 such as expenses related to program instruction, instructional
294 equipment, supplies, instructional personnel, and student
295 services. Grant funds may not be used for indirect costs. Grant
296 recipients must submit an annual report in a format prescribed
297 by the department. The department shall consolidate such annual
298 reports and include the reports in the report required by s.
299 1004.933(5).

300 (6) The State Board of Education may adopt rules to



301 administer this section.

302 Section 8. Section 1011.8041, Florida Statutes, is created
303 to read:

304 1011.8041 GATE Program Performance Fund.—

305 (1) The GATE Program Performance Fund is created to reward
306 school districts and Florida College System institutions for the
307 documented success of students participating in the GATE Program
308 established under s. 1004.933.

309 (2) As used in this section, the term "institution" means a
310 school district career center established under s. 1001.44, a
311 charter technical career center established under s. 1002.34, or
312 a Florida College System institution identified in s. 1000.21
313 which offers the GATE Program pursuant to s. 1004.933.

314 (3) Subject to legislative appropriation, each
315 participating institution must receive \$1,000 per student who
316 completes the GATE Program by completing the adult secondary
317 education program and the career education program within 3
318 years. If the student completed the adult secondary education
319 program and the career education programs at different
320 institutions, then each institution must receive \$500. If funds
321 are insufficient to fully fund the calculated total award, such
322 funds must be prorated among the institutions.

323 (4) The State Board of Education may adopt rules to
324 implement this section.

325 Section 9. This act shall take effect July 1, 2024.

326

327 ===== T I T L E A M E N D M E N T =====

328 And the title is amended as follows:

329 Delete everything before the enacting clause



330 and insert:

331 A bill to be entitled
332 An act relating to education; creating s. 1004.933,
333 F.S.; providing legislative intent; establishing the
334 Graduation Alternative to Traditional Education (GATE)
335 Program within the Department of Education; providing
336 definitions; requiring institutions to waive payments
337 for specified student fees; providing eligibility
338 requirements; providing that students participating in
339 the program are eligible for a specified stipend under
340 certain circumstances; prohibiting an institution from
341 imposing additional eligibility requirements;
342 providing department responsibilities; providing
343 department reporting requirements; authorizing the
344 State Board of Education to adopt rules; amending s.
345 445.009, F.S.; revising the services to which the one-
346 stop delivery system is intended to provide access;
347 amending s. 1003.21, F.S.; requiring a student's
348 certified school counselor or other school personnel
349 to inform the student of opportunities in the GATE
350 Program; amending s. 1003.435, F.S.; requiring
351 district school boards to notify all candidates for
352 the high school equivalency diploma of adult secondary
353 and postsecondary education options, including
354 specified eligibility requirements; creating s.
355 1009.711, F.S.; creating the GATE Scholarship Program;
356 requiring the department to administer the program;
357 requiring the program to reimburse eligible
358 institutions for specified student fees and costs;



359 requiring participating institutions to report
360 specified information to the department; requiring the
361 department to reimburse participating institutions
362 within a specified timeframe; providing that
363 reimbursements are contingent upon legislative
364 appropriation and must be prorated under certain
365 circumstances; authorizing the state board to adopt
366 rules; amending s. 1011.80, F.S.; revising the number
367 of courses for which certain students may be reported
368 for certain funding purposes; providing that such
369 courses do not have to be core curricula courses;
370 deleting a requirement that the department develop a
371 list of courses to be designated as core curricula
372 courses; creating s. 1011.804, F.S.; establishing the
373 GATE Startup Grant Program within the department for a
374 specified purpose; providing eligibility requirements;
375 providing department duties; providing requirements
376 for grant proposals, grant awards, and the use of
377 grant funds; providing reporting requirements;
378 authorizing the state board to adopt rules; creating
379 s. 1011.8041, F.S.; creating the GATE Program
380 Performance Fund for a specified purpose; defining the
381 term "institution"; subject to legislative
382 appropriation, requiring each participating
383 institution to receive a specified amount of money per
384 student, subject to certain conditions; authorizing
385 the state board to adopt rules; providing an effective
386 date.